

# Frankie Valli & The 4 Seasons

G R E A T E S T H I T S

VOLUME  
1



RHINO

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Frankie Valli And The 4 Seasons • Greatest Hits, Vol. 1

R2 70594  
OPCD-1617

1. **Sherry** 2:30
2. **Big Girls Don't Cry** 2:24
3. **Walk Like A Man** 2:16
- \* 4. **Ain't That A Shame** 2:34
5. **Candy Girl** 2:38
6. **Marlena** 2:34
7. **Stay** 1:55
8. **Dawn (Go Away)** 2:46
9. **Ronnie** 2:57
- \*10. **Alone (Why Must I Be Alone)** 2:50
11. **Save It For Me** 2:36
12. **Big Man In Town** 2:45
13. **Bye, Bye, Baby (Baby, Goodbye)** 2:31
- \*14. **Girl Come Running** 2:59
15. **Don't Think Twice, It's All Right** 2:58

\* CD BONUS TRACKS



OPCD-1617

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RHINO

...“He turned on his record player, dressed up in his sharpest clothes, and practiced dancing as if as long as Kookie Byrnes or Cousin Brucie or Mad Daddy or Babalu or Murray the K or Dion or Frankie Valli could be heard, as long as there was some kind of hip ditty bop noise, as long as there was boss action, as long as there was something to remind him of the nowness and coolness of being seventeen and hip, he was safe.”

That’s Richard Price, describing the mindset of one of the young mooks who populate his novel *The Wanderers*. For the record, the mook is an olive-skinned member of a North Bronx gang, circa 1963. But one needn’t share his background to appreciate the litany of hipster saints recited above. The 4 Seasons’ “ditty bop noise”—at its best a series of sharp, ethnourban thunderclaps—is the musical equivalent of Kookie’s cocky grin or Murray’s mouth on mike. “Rag Doll” and “Sherry” and “Stay” are, like “The Wanderer” or “Be My Baby,” pop of an extremely tough order. On those records rests the

rep of Frankie Valli and The 4 Seasons. That includes a fine, private place in American rock history (as *the* hot link between ’50s and ’60s modes), and their enduring status as a Tri-state treasure: the 4 Seasons are nothing less than the East Coast’s Beach Boys, a heartswelling home team with the stats to prove it. As in 90 million records in 20 years.

Like The Beach Boys, The 4 Seasons gave The Beatles a run for their money on the charts (racking up more than 40 chart records), by updating a ’50s genre—vocal group “doowop”—for the ’60s. Unlike the Wilson brothers, though, Frank Valli, Bob Gaudio, Nick Massi and Tommy DeVito were primarily singers, not a guitar-led rock’n’ roll band. Which made The 4 Seasons trend-buckers and totally out-of-step once The Beatles came along to define the sound of the ’60s as precisely that. Out-of-step they remained through much of that fabulous decade; when those around them touted lab-bred Nirvana and giggling gurus, or posed for albums with their private sectors publicly displayed, these

guys just kept making records. Some of the greatest pop records, in fact, to ever hit the tunedecks.



### THE NAME GAME

The story gets under way in 1953. That’s when young Frank Valli (originally Castelluccio), out of Newark, cut his first record. It was a version of “Toastmaster General,” Georgie Jessel’s “My Mother’s Eyes.” It was on Mercury Records, and bylined Frank Valley & The Travelers. It flopped but Valli rebounded, hooking up with a Jersey lounge act, The Variety Trio. He sang lead (and played standup bass or shook maracas), while Hank Majewski sang bass, Tommy DeVito played lead guitar and his brother Nick

sang backup. The Trio worked steady through 1956, at joints like Newark’s Silhouette Club and Passaic’s Broadway Lounge, wowing ’em with standards, Hit Parade covers and such neighb faves as “Come Si Bella” and the risqué “Italian Cowboy Song.” The same year, they signed with RCA, rechristened themselves The Four Lovers and cut “Apple Of My Eye,” written by “All Shook Up” and “Great Balls Of Fire” scribe Otis Blackwell. “Apple” got some action on the East Coast and the Lovers even did the Sullivan show. But they couldn’t follow up their hit, not on RCA—not on Decca (as Frank Valley) or Cindy (as Frankie Vallie & The Romans) or Gone (as The 4 Seasons, named after a venerable Jersey lounge).

By 1961, Valli, Tom DeVito and newcomers Nick Massi (singer/arranger) and Bob Gaudio (ex-Royal Teen, author of “Short Shorts”) were reduced to doing backup vocals on other artists’ records: everything from Danny & The Juniors’ “Rock And Roll Is Here To Stay” to “More Lovin,’ Less Talkin” by Johnny Halo.

## • **PERRY BABY**

• The backup work was the result of a two-year contract the Seasons had signed with Philly producer Bob Crewe, then swinging with Swan (he wrote Fred Cannon's "Tallahassee Lassie" and Billy & Lillie's "La Dee Dah") and Cameo (The Rays' "Silhouettes"). Valli and Gaudio were particularly dragged by the anonymity of backup, especially since Gaudio had just written a tune he wanted the Seasons to cut, a little thing called "**Sherry.**"

• According to Seasons expert (and author of *Still White And All Right*) Ed Engel, Bob Crewe almost blew the Seasons' debut. Since he was now working for Perry Records, Crewe agreed to record the Seasons if they changed the title of Gaudio's song to "Perry," thinking the gender bend would be a real attention-getter. Cooler heads prevailed: Crewe cut, Vee-Jay picked up the master and the group, and "Sherry" kicked off The 4 Seasons' career in the fall of '62.

• With hindsight, we might be tempted to describe all #1 records as "inevitable," even Joe Dowell's "Wooden Heart" (1961) or Player's

• "Baby Come Back" (1978). But there is something instantly classic about "Sherry." Valli's vocal, the lean, taut strut of the melody stretched over that modified "La Dee Dah" rhythm—there was never any question of the impact it would have on Teenage America's ears, even when the competition included such boss discs as "The Loco-Motion," "Party Lights," or "Green Onions."

• Bob Gaudio and Crewe put their pens together for "**Big Girls Don't Cry,**" while Nick Massi arranged the vocals; his "silly boy" bass line and the accordion-pleated harmonies on the chorus may be the record's secret stars. Another chart-topper.

• The group's third consecutive #1, "**Walk Like A Man,**" was their most tense, toughest side yet. It piles layers of clean, crisp echo on the percussion and marches around like a ditty bop general. "Walk" also intros one of the Seasons' most enduring themes: pride maintenance in the face of romantic rejection (cf. "Ronnie," "Big Man In Town"). Just the kind of inspirational medicine 15-year-

• old males could use in 1963; today they run to the misogyny of heavy metal.



## • **TWINSPINS AND LABELSWITCHES**

• Fats Domino's "**Ain't That A Shame!**" here updated with vocal-trumpet riffing and a *big* drum sound, is the first in a line of roots covers that includes Little Joe & The Thrillers' "Peanuts," Maurice Williams' "Stay," The Shepherd Sisters' "Alone," and, much later, The Shirelles' "Will You Love Me Tomorrow."

• "**Candy Girl**"/"**Marlena**" must surely rank as one of the choicest twinspace ever waxed. A Top 5 item from the summer of '63, "Candy"

• is sublime, a woodblock sam with a razor strop rhythm and possibly Valli's most yearning vocal. The flip is both hard and sweet, with Frank pining for the same corner flirt Avalon fell for in "Gingerbread." Piano, claps, a rugged snare and Valli's "rupe-dupe-dooby-do's" make the fade all-time.

• Early the next year, the group left Vee-Jay for Mercury's Philips subsidiary. "**Dawn (Go Away),**" with its "Telstar" rhythm and heavy production, was the first Philips issue. It also established another popular Seasonal theme: the vulnerability hidden beneath the chest-pounding pride of "Walk Like A Man." Here, as in "Bye Bye Baby (Baby Goodbye)," Frankie sends the gal away, explaining that, well, he's just not worthy: "Think what the future would be with a poor boy like me."

• Two other 1964 singles were lame-duck releases from Vee-Jay's vaults. "**Alone**" is a lively remake of the Shepherds' nervous '57 doowop.

• "**Stay**" is a minor masterpiece, a whiplash calypso from the very

• nexus of Italo-Sudamerican rela-  
• tions. At 1:58, it really should stay  
• a little bit longer, though.

• Meanwhile, the Philips hit streak  
• launched by "Dawn" rolled on  
• with "**Ronnie**": a driving Calello  
• arrangement featuring homicidal  
• drums and Valli scaling a vocal  
• wall of sound by the record's end.  
• Late '64 featured a pair of aces  
• from the Seasons' new writing team  
• of Sandy Linzer and Denny Randell.  
• While Crewe and Gaudio still pro-  
• duce, there's something new—  
• fuller and more dramatic—about  
• the style of "**Save It For Me**" and  
• "**Big Man In Town**." The latter  
• starts with a melancholy harmoni-  
• ca out of a Leone western, then  
• opens onto a vista of surging  
• drums and wailing Valli. A wide-  
• screen rock opera in 2:47.

• Crewe and Gaudio return as  
• writer-producers on January '65's  
• "**Bye, Bye, Baby (Baby Good-  
• bye)**," a forceful farewell kiss-off  
• that nonetheless presages the  
• group's move toward the middle  
• of the road. They close the year  
• out with another Gaudio-Crewe  
• cut, "**Girl Come Running**," and a  
• marred outtake from the *4 Seasons  
• Sing Hits By Bacharach, David And  
• Dylan* album. Credited to The  
• Wonder Who, "**Don't Think Twice**"  
• drew laughs and chart bullets (it  
• reached the 12-spot in November).  
• In its way, it also suggested that  
• changes would soon visit the  
• Seasons—as surely as they would  
• everyone else making music in  
• the mid '60s.

• And that's only the half of it.  
• There's still *Volume 2*.

• GENE SCULATTI

All selections produced by **Bob Crewe**

All Selections Produced Under License From The Four Seasons  
Partnership By Arrangement With Warner Special Products

Compilation: **Richard Foos/ Gary Stewart**

Art Direction: **Geoff Gans**

Photos: **Michael Ochs Archives, Bob Golden, Bob Sobo**

Remastering: **Bill Inglot & Ken Perry**

1. **Sherry**  
(Bob Gaudio)  
Claridge Music Inc. ASCAP  
(Vee-Jay single #465, 8/62)
2. **Big Girls Don't Cry**  
(Gaudio-Crewe)  
Claridge Music Inc./Gavadima Music Inc.  
ASCAP (Vee-Jay single #465, 10/62)
3. **Walk Like A Man**  
(Gaudio-Crewe)  
Claridge Music Inc./Gavadima Music Inc.  
ASCAP (Vee-Jay single #485, 1/63)
4. **Ain't That A Shame**  
(Bartholomew-Domino)  
EMI Unart Catalog Inc. BMI  
(Vee-Jay single #512, 4/63)
5. **Candy Girl**  
(Larry Santos)  
Claridge Music Inc./Gavadima Music Inc.  
ASCAP (Vee-Jay single #539, 6/63)
6. **Marlena**  
(Bob Gaudio)  
Claridge Music Inc. ASCAP  
(Vee-Jay single #539, 6/63)
7. **Stay**  
(Maurice Williams)  
Cherio Music Corp. BMI  
(Vee-Jay single #582, 2/64)
8. **Dawn (Go Away)**  
(Gaudio-Linzer)  
Saturday Music Inc./Seasons Four Music  
BMI (Philips single #40166, 1/64)
9. **Ronnie**  
(Gaudio-Crewe)  
Saturday Music Inc./Seasons Four Music  
BMI (Philips single #40185, 3/64)
10. **Alone (Why Must I  
Be Alone)**  
(Craft-Craft)  
Selma Music Corp. BMI  
(Vee-Jay single #597, 5/64)
11. **Save It For Me**  
(Gaudio-Crewe)  
Gavadima Music Inc. ASCAP/Saturday  
Music Inc. BMI (Philips single #40225,  
8/64)
12. **Big Man In Town**  
(Bob Gaudio)  
Saturday Music Inc./Seasons Four Music  
BMI (Philips single #40238, 10/64)
13. **Bye, Bye, Baby  
(Baby, Goodbye)**  
(Gaudio-Crewe)  
Saturday Music Inc./Seasons Four Music  
BMI (Philips single #40260, 1/65)
14. **Girl Come Running**  
(Gaudio-Crewe)  
Saturday Music Inc./Seasons Four Music  
BMI (Philips single #40305, 6/65)
15. **Don't Think Twice,  
It's All Right**  
**The Wonder Who?**  
(Bob Dylan) Special Rider Music ASCAP  
(Philips single #40324, 10/65)

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AIN'T THAT A  
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CANDY GIRL [2:38] .5

MARLENA [2:34] .6

STAY [1:55] .7

DAWN (GO AWAY) [2:46] .8

9. RONNIE [2:57]

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ALONE) [2:50]

11. SAVE IT FOR ME [2:36]

12. BIG MAN IN TOWN [2:45]

13. BYE, BYE, BABY  
(BABY, GOODBYE) [2:31]

14. GIRL COME RUNNING  
[2:59]

15. DON'T THINK TWICE  
IT'S ALRIGHT [2:58]



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STEREO



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